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Local Politics and National Integration

The Fukui Prefectural Assembly in the 1880s

by James L. McClain

As an era of nation-building in Japan, the 1870s and 1880s witnessed the creation of institutions rich in both quantity and variety. Among these, institutions possessing a national focus, such as the Imperial Diet, have been the subject of numerous studies; while those with a more local orientation, such as the prefectural assemblies, have received considerably less attention. Yet, in many ways—as arenas for the settlement of local political disputes, as training grounds for politicians, and perhaps most importantly, as mechanisms for the integration of regional entities into the national polity—the prefectural assemblies established in 1879 played an important role in the political development of modern Japan. An examination of one of these assemblies, the Fukui Prefectural Assembly during the 1880s, provides a convenient point of entry into the study of these local deliberative bodies.[1]

Historians have evaluated the significance of prefectural assemblies in various ways. Some, George Sansom and Roger Hackett for instance, see such assemblies

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[1] Imperial Decree Number 18, issued in July 1878, established the regulations for the prefectural assemblies which were to begin in 1879. See Walter W. McLaren, ed., 'Japanese Government Documents' (JGD), in TASJ, XLII, 1 (May 1914), pp. 272–6.

Fukui Prefecture, however, was not established permanently until 1881, and this study begins with the first Prefectural Assembly, called in that year. I have chosen to terminate my study in 1890 for various reasons. First, the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889 and the first general elections for the Imperial Diet in 1890 diverted much of Fukui's attention to the national level. Second, Fukui itself was reorganized into new village, town and city units which, in effect, reapportioned the seats in the assembly. Further, the Prefectural Assembly elections became indirect with the representatives being chosen by the city and district (*gun*) assemblies. As a result, people took less interest in the Prefectural Assembly and became more concerned with the assemblies on the sub-prefectural level. See Fukui Kengikaishi Hensan Iinkai 福井県議会史編纂委員会, ed., *Fukui Kengikaishi* (Fukui, 1971), I, pp. 1033–9, 1067 & 1129. Hereafter cited as FKGS, with all references being to Volume I.

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as ineffectual and unimportant because of the severe restrictions placed upon them by the central government.[2] Masumi Junnosuke, a prominent Japanese historian, feels that the early assemblies were of little consequence because influential local residents often were unwilling to serve as representatives.[3] Other scholars, such as Kurt Steiner, stress the degree of centralized control and also argue that participants in the Popular Rights Movement[4]—an informal alliance of persons generally outside of government who advocated the establishment of constitutional government, a reduction of land taxes, and the revision of the unequal treaties with Western nations—attempted to take over the assemblies and use them as a weapon in their struggle against the central authorities.[5] On the other hand, some historians, George Akita for example, conclude that representatives to the local assemblies gained both valuable political experience and a basis of popular support which allowed them to pursue national political careers.[6]

As we shall see, some of these generalizations hold true for Fukui; others do not. First, the Fukui Prefectural Assembly was an important institution in that its members decided levels of funding for prefectural programs concerning education, health, and the promotion of industry and agriculture; all of which directly affected the quality of life within the prefecture itself and indirectly influenced Japan's overall national development. Second, Fukui assembly representatives who were active in the Popular Rights Movement seldom acted as a bloc to oppose bills introduced by the governor. For a variety of reasons, including conflicting goals and personal rivalries, these men were as often at odds with each other as they were united in opposition to the governor. Third, many men from Fukui did serve in the national Imperial Diet; almost ten percent of those elected to the Fukui Prefectural Assembly during its first decade of existence eventually were to hold seats in either the House of Representatives or the House of Peers. Finally, the establishment of the assembly promoted a growing sense of identity between national and local interests and encouraged an ever-increasing number of individuals to participate in political decision-making and execution. It was this final, integrative feature which contributed significantly to Fukui's relatively harmonious and peaceful transition from a feudal domain with a small, hereditary governing class to a modern prefecture with individuals and groups from numerous levels of society vying for political authority.

The reasons underlying the central government's decision in the late 1870s

[2] George B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan* (New York, 1949), p. 357; Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 107 & 114.

[3] Masumi Junnosuke 升味準之輔, 'Nihon Seitōshi ni okeru Chihō Seiji no Shomondai: 1880 nendai no Fukenkai' 日本政党史に於ける地方政治の諸問題: 一八八〇年代の府県会, in *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi* 国家学会雑誌, 73, 4 & 5 (Dec 1959 & Jan 1960), pp. 2–4.

[4] *Jiyū Minken Undō* 自由民権運動

[5] Kurt Steiner, *Local Government in Japan* (Stanford, 1965), pp. 31 & 50–2.

[6] George Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868–1900* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 82–3.

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to establish officially prefectural assemblies as part of a general reorganization of local government are related to Japan's nation-building process. Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, formal administrative power over the whole of the Japanese islands was transferred to a newly formed central government headed chiefly by samurai activists and nobles who had played key roles in the 1868 coup d'état. At the outset of the Meiji period, the new government's powers were nominal, and throughout the 1870s and early 1880s the Meiji leaders instituted a series of political, economic, and social reforms designed to organize, maintain, and solidify their authority.

One important fiscal reform, for example, was the reorganization of the currency system and the creation of the yen as a standard unit of coinage. More importantly, the revision of the land tax system in 1873 insured a steady revenue supply and guaranteed long-range fiscal stability. Among the more important social changes was the abolition of the old estate system and class restrictions.[7]

On the political and administrative level, the so-called Charter Oath, which elucidated the general principles and aspirations of the new government, was proclaimed on 6 April 1868. Just two months later, the Meiji leaders issued the *Seitaisho*,[8] a set of plans specifying governmental organization. A series of Imperial decrees in the 1870s simplified and rationalized this new administration. It was also during the 1870s that various members of the government began to plan for a constitution and a national assembly—institutions they felt essential for creating a strong, centralized nation.[9]

The establishment of a subordinate and uniform system of local government was seen as another important step in effectively centralizing power. As early as 1868, the new government dispatched representatives to the *han* and issued a set of edicts aimed at standardizing administrative procedures throughout the country. In the spring and early summer of 1869, the daimyo were required to acknowledge central government supremacy by returning their land registers and documents of enfeoffment to the emperor and by receiving reappointment as 'governors' paid an annual stipend from Tokyo. Finally, in 1871 the Meiji leaders coverted the *han* into prefectures and replaced the daimyo-governors with officials directly appointed from Tokyo.[10]

Concurrent with these developments, however, challenges to the expansion of central government power arose on several fronts. In the provinces, large numbers of citizens, typically of peasant origin, registered their ingrained antipathy to

[7] For further details, see William Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford, 1972), pp. 379–404; John W. Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 277–84.

[8] 政体書

[9] See Beasley, pp. 313–24, for further information.

[10] Beasley, pp. 325–49. For an illustration of how this process worked in one particular area, see John W. Hall, 'From Tokugawa to Meiji in Japanese Local Administration', in John W. Hall & Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 375–86. In 1871, there were approximately 280 local units; consolidation reduced the number to 46 by 1890.

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outside authority and anger over many of the new government's policies by engaging in more than two hundred separate acts of collective violence between the years 1868 and 1878.[11]

An even more serious threat to the government came in the form of samurai rebellions. After major uprisings in 1874, 1875, and 1876, the largest of these rebellions erupted in early 1877 in the south of Kyushu. Led by Saigō Takamori,[12] himself a major government figure in the late 1860s and early 1870s, the rebels fielded an army of almost 40,000 men and continued to fight for nearly eight months. In the end, at a cost of 14,000 lives, the government put down the rebellion and demonstrated its supremacy.[13]

Following the establishment of prefectures in 1871, assemblies of local people, usually called *chihō minkai* or *chihō gikai*,[14] sprang up and posed a third potential threat to the authority of the new central government. Established without official sanction on the initiative of local officials or political leaders, and composed of either ex-samurai or rich farmers, these assemblies frequently submitted petitions to the Meiji leaders criticizing government policy. Moreover, they often discussed and acted on issues, establishing constabularies for instance, which the central government wanted to keep within its own domain. In the Fukui area, for example, the governor of Tsuruga Prefecture[15] (later incorporated as part of Fukui Prefecture) called prominent local officials together for ten days in July 1874 to discuss public works, police, the creation of a permanent assembly, aid to the poor, and salaries for officials of local government.[16] By 1875, more than twenty such assemblies had been established in the prefectures and had become a source of major concern to the central government.[17]

Thus, two themes—on the one hand, the Tokyo government's desire to centralize authority in order to accomplish reforms creating a strong nation, and, on the other, a growing realization that at least some degree of decentralization was necessary in order to insure the cooperation of local units—dominated the thoughts of the Meiji leaders as they turned their attention to the creation of a system of local government. Kido Kōin,[18] a key member of government in the early years of the Meiji period, is representative of those who at first wished to impose a highly centralized form of local administration, only to abandon it later for a more decentralized approach. Although Kido had early in his career advocated total centralization of authority under direct Imperial rule, his study of Western governmental systems as a member of an overseas mission led him to conclude

[11] For details of one of these, see Irwin Scheiner, 'The Mindful Peasant: Sketches for a Study of Rebellion', in JAS, XXXII, 4 (Aug 1973), pp. 579–91.

[12] 西郷隆盛, 1827–77.

[13] Kagoshima Ken, ed., *Kagoshima Kenshi* 鹿児島県史 (Fukuoka, 1967, rev. ed.), III, pp. 940–1020.

[14] 地方民会, 地方議会

[15] 敦賀県

[16] FKGS, pp. 163–4.

[17] Shin'ichi Fujii, *The Constitution of Japan* (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 56–9; Nobutaka Ike, *The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan* (Baltimore, 1950), p. 40.

[18] 木戸孝允

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that constitutional government based on a system of local self-administration was essential for the creation of a modern state. In 1873 and again in 1876 Kido submitted memorials outlining plans for decentralized systems of local government, including the establishment of prefectural, district (*gun*), and town assemblies.[19]

The ideas of Ōkubo Toshimichi,[20] who by the mid-1870s had emerged as the most important governmental figure, also reflect the tension between a centralized versus decentralized approach. In the early 1870s, Ōkubo advocated a constitutional government which would concentrate power in the hands of a few national leaders.[21] By 1878, however, he had become deeply distressed by the seriousness of agrarian unrest and was beginning to conclude that this was due primarily to the efforts to centralize control over local administration. Consequently, Ōkubo proposed reforms, including the creation of local assemblies, that would turn control over local issues to local units of government. This, he hoped, would reduce regional hostility toward the national government, promote tranquility in the countryside, and encourage a sense of unity between the people and the government.[22]

Yamagata Aritomo,[23] a successor to Ōkubo as Home Minister, perhaps best expressed this idea of unity and the desire for a more complete integration of local and national administration when, at a somewhat later date, he wrote: 'Local self-government raises the public and cooperative spirit, unites the ideas and hopes of the people and the policy and aims of the bureaucracy, and fosters patriotism and a sense of independence and honor of the entire country.'[24]

This thinking of the Meiji leaders resulted in the so-called Three New Laws,

[19] In addition, Kido felt that these measures, particularly the creation of assemblies, would be good political tactics. He hoped to provide opportunities for ambitious ex-samurai, keep political agitation away from the national level, and reduce anti-government feeling by allowing participation in the governing process on the lower levels. For more details, see Sidney B. Brown, 'Kido Takayoshi (1833–1877): Meiji Japan's Cautious Revolutionary', in *Pacific Historical Review*, 25 (1956), pp. 151–62; Richard Staubitz, 'The Establishment of the System of Local Self-Government (1888–1890) in Japan', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Yale, 1973, pp. 20–4.

[20] 大久保利通, 1830–78.

[21] Akita, p. 12; Masakazu Iwata, *Okubo Toshimichi—The Bismark of Japan* (Berkeley, 1964), pp. 176–8.

[22] Staubitz, pp. 24–30.

[23] 山県有朋, 1838–1922.

[24] Quoted in Steiner, pp. 36–7. A number of Western historians, usually following the lead of Osatake Takeki 尾佐竹猛, *Nihon Kensei-shi Taikō* 日本憲政史大綱 (Tokyo, 1939), feel that the Meiji leaders were interested only in protecting their own power and that the decentralizing trends were merely concessions to dissident groups outside of government. See, for example, George Beckmann, *The Making of the Meiji Constitution* (Lawrence, 1957); Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley, 1953); and Ike, *The Beginnings*.

More recently, Akita has argued convincingly in his *Foundations* that the Meiji leaders were not forced into granting concessions (prefectural assemblies and a constitution), but accepted the basic premises of constitutional government and power-sharing. Staubitz also shows that Yamagata did not intend the system of local self-government to be a control mechanism for an autocratic central government.

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Imperial Decrees 17, 18, and 19, issued in July 1878. These included the Law for Reorganization of Districts, Wards, Towns, and Villages, the Regulations for Prefectural Assemblies, and the Regulation of Local Taxes.[25] Two years later, in April 1880, a fourth law, the Law Regarding Ward, Town, and Village Assemblies[26] was added. Taken as a unit, these laws established a systematic and comprehensive structure of local government.[27]

The Regulations for Prefectural Assemblies, Imperial Decree Number 18, was a relatively simple law. It authorized the formation of an elective assembly in each prefecture to deliberate on a local budget, established election procedures, outlined rules of debate, and specified the authority of the prefectural governor over the assembly.[28] During the course of the next decade, the rules were amended a number of times. Some of these revisions were designed merely to clear up ambiguities in the original law, while others adjusted controversial regulations which had disrupted assembly business. Many assemblies, for example, protested the right of the governors to consult with the Home Minister and change any measure passed by the assembly. Consequently, an 1881 amendment provided that governors must resubmit resolutions to the assembly before seeking the advice of Tokyo.

Most of the amendments, however, attempted to curb the growing independence of the assemblies. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, many participants in the Popular Rights Movement won election to the prefectural assemblies and used their positions both to block measures proposed by the governors and to criticize the national government for supposed delays in establishing a constitution and a national assembly. Alarmed, the government enacted a series of amendments designed to remove dissidents from assemblies and to make the assemblies more responsive to government supervision. An 1880 amendment, for example, allowed an assembly to remove from office any member who was absent without proper reason and prohibited any such person from standing for election for four years —a measure aimed directly at Popular Rights Movement participants who often boycotted assembly meetings as a form of protest against government actions.[29]

Fukui's experience in organizing a prefectural assembly illustrates many of the themes and trends discussed above. Fukui was created as a prefecture in February 1881,[30] and one of the first duties of the new governor, Ishiguro Tsutomu,[31] was to announce, on 20 March, the date and procedures for elections to the prefectural assembly. On 11 May, just one day after the official posting of the election

[25] *Gunkuchōson Henseihō* 郡区町村編成法; *Fukenkai Kisoku* 府県会規則; *Chihōzei Kisoku* 地方税規則. These are often collectively called the Three New Laws, *Sanshinpō* 三新法.

[26] *Kuchōsonkaihō* 区町村会法

[27] For further details, see Osatake, pp. 262–3, and Staubitz, pp. 30–3.

[28] JGD, pp. 272–6.

[29] JGD, pp. 288–9, and FKGS, pp. 622–4.

[30] Part of modern-day Fukui had existed as a *han* during the Tokugawa era, but the area's post-1868 administrative history is rather complex. For details, see Fukui Kenshi Fukkoku Kankōkai 福井県史復刻刊行会, ed., *Fukui Kenshi* [FK] (Fukui, 1920, 1970), III, pp. 3–29.

[31] 石黒務

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results, Governor Ishiguro issued a notice calling an extraordinary meeting of the assembly beginning 25 May to elect assembly officers and deliberate on the budget for the remainder of fiscal 1881 (February 1881 through June 1881).[32] Between the spring of 1881 and the end of 1890, when Fukui's system of local self-government was modified, the Prefectural Assembly was convened for ten regular and seventeen extraordinary sessions. The thirty-six delegates met in regular session once a year, in March, until 1885, and in November thereafter, to discuss and pass on a budget for items to be funded with prefectural revenues.[33] The extraordinary sessions were convened by the governor when he deemed necessary, typically to select assembly officials and to delibrate on temporary expenditures in times of natural disasters.

The membership of this first assembly and the election process exhibit some characteristics that remained constant throughout the decade of the 1880s. The 1878 Regulations for Prefectural Assemblies spelled out the official election procedures. Each *gun* elected a specified number of representatives, based roughly on population.[34] Upon receipt of the governor's election notice, each *gun* office would publicly post the notice along with a list of men eligible to hold office and distribute ballots to the electors. These electors would fill in the name, address, and age of the candidates for whom they wished to vote and return the ballots to the *gun* office on the day of the election. According to the 1878 law, males over 25 who paid five yen or more land tax, with the exception of bankrupts, the insane, and certain criminals, were eligible to vote. Males over 25 who paid at least ten yen in land tax, with the above exceptions plus teachers and officials, qualified as candidates. In 1880, the voting age was reduced to 20, and clergy[35] were prohibited from serving in the assembly. The term of office was four years, and election of half the assembly membership was to be held each odd-numbered year.

[32] FKGS, pp. 498–9 & 504.

[33] The appropriation bills in 1883 were as follows: police, construction and maintenance of police office buildings, public works, public works grants to towns and villages, health, education, education grants to towns and villages (eliminated in 1886), assembly expenses, construction and maintenance of *gun* office buildings, salaries and expenses for *gun* officials, poor relief, coastal watch and sea rescue, printing and distribution of assembly documents, promotion of agriculture and industry, salaries and expenses for *kochō* 戸長, expenses related to tax collection, construction and maintenance of prefectural buildings, prefectural prison expenses, construction and maintenance of prefectural prisons, and a Disaster Relief Fund. In 1886, postal service was added.

Revenue bills included the local land tax (computed as a proportion of the national land tax), the household tax (levied directly on each household), a tax on industry, and a miscellaneous tax (levied on certain businesses such as restaurants, public baths and theaters).

[34] Information about the national election laws is taken from JGD, pp. 273–5 & 292; Jichi Shinkō Chūōkai 自治振興中央会, ed., *Fuken Seido Shiryō* 府県制度資料 (Tokyo, 1941), pp. 156–8; data on the number of Fukui residents eligible to be candidates and electors are from FKGS, pp. 498–9.

In Fukui, the *gun* and numbers of representatives were as follows: Asuha, 5; Imadachi, 4; Mikata, 2; Nanjō, 2; Nifu, 4; Ōi, 2; Onifu, 3; Ōno, 5; Sakai, 5; Tsuruga, 2; Yoshida, 2: total, 36.

[35] *Kyōdōshoku* 教導職

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In 1881 in Fukui, approximately 15,000 of the prefecture's 577,000 residents were eligible to stand as candidates for the assembly's 36 seats, and a total of 27,000 men qualified as electors.

In actual practice, political organizations, composed of locally prominent persons, would meet in each of Fukui's *gun* to discuss and select a slate of candidates. Following the posting of the election notice in March 1881, for example, Sugita Teiichi and Yao Hachibei,[36] well known locally for their participation in the Popular Rights Movement, gathered twenty-seven village leaders from some twenty-three villages in Sakai *gun* to discuss candidates for Sakai's five assembly seats. Meeting in early April, this group decided on Sugita, Yao, Ōtani Kunitarō, Tsuchiya Kyūzaemon, and Mitsuta Gihei;[37] all of whom, except Mitsuta, were ultimately elected to serve in Fukui's first assembly. Throughout the decade of the 1880s, similar groups met before elections in each of Fukui's *gun* and seem to have obtained equally successful results.[38]

The dominance of local elites constitutes another enduring characteristic of the assembly membership during its initial decade of existence.[39] Of the thirty-six assembly members in 1881, for example, at least twenty-three held town or village office at some point during their careers.[40] By 1882, this number fell to sixteen, or roughly one-half of the assembly, and it remained at approximately that level throughout the decade. Moreover, many representatives who apparently wielded considerable local influence did not hold town or village office, or at least chose not to register that information on official assembly documents. Sugita Teiichi, instrumental in selecting the candidates for Sakai, was a landlord, *sake* brewer, and offspring of a family that had provided senior village headmen[41] during the Tokugawa period; yet he himself did not hold village office. Tatsuta Toshimi[42] of Yoshida *gun*, another representative not listed officially as a Meiji-era village officer, was a landlord, *sake* brewer, and former village headman[43] during the Tokugawa period. Indeed, nearly every non-*shizoku*[44] who served in the Fukui Prefectural Assembly during the 1880s was a man of local prominence—either because of his official position, former status, or wealth. This should not be surprising since it is precisely these men who were enfranchised and who,

[36] 杉田定一, 矢尾八兵衛

[37] 大谷国太郎, 土屋久左衛門, 三ツ田儀兵衛

[38] FKGS, pp. 500 & 940.

[39] One index for elites is the number of men who served at sometime in their careers as *kochō* 戸長, *kuchō* 区長, *sonchō* 村長, or *rengōsonchō* 連合村長. For further details on these village-level offices, see Takayanagi Kōju 高柳光寿 & Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed., *Nihonshi Jiten* 日本史辞典 (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 264 & 333; Staubitz, pp. 13–8.

[40] Information about occupation and official positions is taken from the membership lists for each assembly which appear throughout FKGS and the summary table in FKGS, pp. 465–83. This information is not complete, however, and my figures are therefore minimums. Moreover, there are inconsistencies between the individual lists and the summary table. I have checked the lists against information given in FK, pp. 50–61. The Fukui Kengikaishi Hensan Iinkai plans to publish a volume of biographical sketches which may help to clear up some of these ambiguities.

[41] *Ōjōya* 大庄屋

[42] 竜田利見

[43] *Shōya* 庄屋

[44] 士族

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on their own initiative, developed informal mechanisms for choosing and electing candidates.

A third enduring characteristic of the Fukui Prefectural Assembly representatives was the continuous appearance of men who built political careers on either the national or local level. Sugita Teiichi was perhaps the best known. The son of a senior headman active in the anti-Tokugawa movement, Sugita energetically participated in the Popular Rights Movement. In the late 1870s in Fukui, he helped to form a number of clubs which invited speakers from the Popular Rights Movement, delivered numerous speeches himself urging the establishment of constitutional government and a reduction of land taxes, and circulated petitions concerning these issues to be sent to the national government. A successful candidate in the first elections to the Fukui Prefectural Assembly, Sugita was elected assembly vice-chairman in May 1881. Later the same year, the Tokyo government declared its intention to promulgate a constitution and open a national assembly in 1890. Within a few months, Sugita resigned from the Fukui assembly and, during the next few years, worked to establish and promote one of the first political parties in the Fukui area, the Nan'etsu Liberal Party.[45] With the collapse of the Popular Rights Movement, he left Japan in August 1884, and traveled for three and a half years in China, the United States, and Europe. In January 1889, immediately after his return to Japan, he was again elected to the Fukui assembly. Later the same year, he formed the Nan'etsu Club[46] to prepare a slate of candidates for the forthcoming election of representatives to the Imperial Diet. Three of the four Fukui men chosen in the elections of July 1890 were members of this club, including Sugita himself, who served in the House of Representatives until his appointment to the House of Peers in 1909.[47]

Tokioka Matazaemon,[48] another representative to the first Fukui Prefectural Assembly in 1881, also went on to hold national office.[49] A doctor and *sake* brewer from Ōi *gun*, Tokioka served in the Fukui assembly from April 1881 until March 1885, and again from December 1887 until July 1890, and was the assembly's third chairman, holding the office for eight months beginning in June 1884. He was elected to the House of Representatives of the Imperial Diet in 1894, 1898, 1903, and 1904, the year of his death.

A number of men also carved out distinguished careers on the local level. Kawabata Genzō,[50] the head priest of a shrine in Tsuruga (he often listed himself as a 'farmer' on assembly documents), was a delegate to each of the twenty-one Fukui assemblies that met between May 1881 and January 1889. He also served

[45] *Nan'etsu Jiyūtō* 南越自由党

[46] *Nan'etsu Kurabu* 南越倶楽部

[47] Information about Sugita is contained in FKGS, pp. 434–8, 457, & 624–5; FK, pp. 82–4; Shimonaka Yasaburō 下中弥三郎, ed., *Daijinmei Jiten* 大人名事典 (Tokyo, 1953), p. 477; Nojiri Osamu 野尻修, 'Sugita Junsan' 杉田鶉山, in Saku Takashi 佐久高士, ed., *Fukui no Rekishi* 福井の歴史 (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 99–119.

[48] 時岡又左衛門

[49] Data on Tokioka and other representatives is from FKGS, pp. 465–84; FK, pp. 50–61 & 81–6.

[50] 河端彦造

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as the assembly's fifth vice-chairman in 1885. Okabe Hiroshi,[51] a substitute for Sugita Teiichi for less than a month in 1882, was first elected to the assembly in his own right in 1885. Rising to the post of vice-chairman in 1887, Okabe, as we shall see later, became one of the assembly's most influential members and leader of one of its largest factions.

Although certain characteristics were common to all of the assemblies, many features concerning the configuration of assembly membership changed during the course of the decade. The number of former samurai who served as delegates, for example, steadily declined.[52] In the 1881 and 1882 regular assemblies five *shizoku* held office, and one of them, Honda Teisuke,[53] was chosen as the assembly's first chairman. By 1884 just three *shizoku* remained, and only one, Yamada Minoru,[54] was elected to serve more than one term during the balance of the decade.

A number of reasons account for this decline. First, there was a great deal of hostility between commoner and *shizoku* elements within the assembly. In part, this was caused by divergent self-interests. The former samurai consistently pressed for larger expenditures to develop small, urban businesses in order to help their numerous fellow *shizoku* who were attempting to start small enterprises. The commoners, mostly wealthy landlords, just as consistently pressed for increased expenditures to promote agriculture and related concerns, such as silkworm cultivation, which were of negligible importance to most Fukui *shizoku*. In part, this hostility was the result of simple class antagonism. The *shizoku*, entitled by birth to be rulers during the Tokugawa period, were often haughty and condescending toward the commoners. The resulting atmosphere of class rivalry, as we shall see later, led directly to Honda's forced retirement in 1883.

A second reason for the decreasing number of former samurai in the early Fukui assemblies was that some left to concentrate on other careers. Hayashi Tōgorō,[55] for example, resigned from the assembly in 1882 to become one of the original promoters of the Hokuriku Railroad Company. Another *shizoku* representative to the first assembly from Fukui city, Itō Makoto,[56] founded one of the area's first newspaper companies.

Third, most *shizoku* were unable to establish the contacts and build the kind of support needed for consistent re-election. An exception was Yamada Minoru, who served in nearly every assembly from 1881 until his election to the House of Peers in 1890. Intensely interested in local affairs (he often referred to himself as a 'farmer' rather than a *shizoku*), Yamada participated in the Popular Rights Movement and became closely associated with such fellow Sakai residents as Sugita Teiichi and Yao Hachibei, who selected and promoted the election of candidates from that *gun*.

[51] 岡部広
[52] FKGS, pp. 465–83; FK, pp. 51–60.
[53] 本田鼎介
[54] 山田穣
[55] 林藤五郎
[56] 伊藤真

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Another changing feature of the Fukui assembly membership was the fluctuating number of assembly representatives who participated in the Popular Rights Movement. In general, their strength rose and fell with the vitality of the movement itself, which flourished in Fukui in the late 1870s and early 1880s but declined thereafter.[57] Sugita Teiichi was active throughout the 1870s in urging Tokyo to reduce land taxes and establish a constitutional government. In 1878, he and Yao Hachibei organized a Reduce the Land Tax Movement[58] that was supported by landlords, tenants, and *sake* brewers. Two years later, they established the Legal Research Institute[59] which, financed by cash contributions from twenty-six Fukui villages, published articles and pamphlets supporting the Popular Rights and Reduce the Land Tax Movements. In 1882, Sugita founded the Hokuriku Liberal Newspaper[60] and helped to establish the area's first political party, the Nan'etsu Liberal Party. Men active in these efforts eventually sought seats in the Fukui assembly, and at least twelve were represented in the 1881 and 1883 regular assemblies, with fourteen in the 1882 assembly.

By 1884, however, their numbers started to decline and, until 1888, there appears to have been a maximum of nine Popular Rights advocates in any one assembly. This did not mean the end of the movement's influence in the assembly, however. Yamada Minoru, for example, sat in most of the assemblies during the 1880s and twice held the post of chairman. In addition, Nagata Jōemon[61] from Onifu *gun* served in each assembly from March 1882 through July 1890, and frequently held the office of chairman or vice-chairman. By the late 1880s, representation again started to rise, as many activists returned to politics to prepare themselves for the 1890 elections to the Imperial Diet. It was in 1889, for example, that Sugita formed the *Nanzen Kurabu* to screen candidates and campaign for their election to the national assembly.

The decline in the number of Popular Rightists elected to the Fukui assembly in the mid-1880s primarily seems to be due to severe government repression in the Fukui area. Sugita, for example, was imprisoned for six months beginning in

[57] Party and organizational membership is not included in the reprinted assembly records. Two main sources for identifying Popular Rightists, however, appear in FKGS, pp. 457–62. One is a list of Fukui residents whose names appeared in *Jiyū Shimbun*, the more or less official organ of the Popular Rights Movement. The other is a list of 61 Fukui residents who were members of the *Rikken Seitō* 立憲政党, a party which later merged with the *Jiyūtō* 自由党. Additional references to the assembly members and the Popular Rights Movement appear in scattered, and unexpected, places throughout FKGS. Thus it is impossible to know exactly how many members of the Fukui assembly were also participants in the movement and my figures represent minimums. For some of the problems involved in identifying *Jiyūtō* members, see Satō Seiichirō 佐藤誠一郎, 'Meiji Jūshichinen Gogatsu no Jiyūtōin Meibo ni tsuite' 明治十七年五月の自由党員名簿について, in *Rekishigaku Kenkyū* 歴史学研究, 178 (Dec 1954), pp. 31–8.

The information in the text is from FKGS, pp. 429–38, 443–8, 452, 455–62, 576, 580–1, 624–6, 642–3 & 912; FK, p. 71; Nojiri, pp. 99–119; *Nihon Rekishi Daijiten*, XII, pp. 108–9.

[58] *Chiso Keigen Undō* 地租軽減運動

[59] *Hōri Kenkyūjo* 法理研究所

[60] *Hokuriku Jiyū Shimbun* 北陸自由新聞

[61] 永田定右衛門

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1881 on the grounds that certain of his earlier journal articles had indirectly contributed to agrarian unrest. Further, government regulations promulgated in June 1882 made it difficult to continue holding public meetings. But the real end of a vital Popular Rights Movement in Fukui resulted from the Takada Incident[62] of 1883 in which a police spy infiltrated the Hokuriku Liberal Party Friendship Club,[63] which Sugita had helped to form, and claimed to have found evidence of plans to start a civil war and to assassinate high government officials. Although subsequent investigation showed the evidence insufficient to sustain such charges, dozens of men were arrested and one, Akai Kageaki,[64] eventually received the death sentence. It was soon after this incident that Sugita left Japan and a number of Popular Rightists, such as Yao Hachibei and Tsuchiya Kyūzaemon, retired from the Fukui assembly.

The Popular Rightists who served in the assembly, it should be pointed out, did not always act as a united group. Following poor harvests in 1883, for example, Governor Ishiguro convened an extraordinary December meeting of the assembly and proposed a bill providing for the purchase and warehousing of rice in order to safeguard against possible famine in the following year. Nearly all assembly members approved the purchase of some relief rice, but there was serious disagreement over the question of exactly where to store it. The original bill called for the rice to be kept in warehouses in Sakai. Nagata Jōemon, a Popular Rightist from Onifu, however, wanted it stored in his *gun*; others wanted it kept in their home areas. When assembly chairman Yamada Minoru, from Sakai, tried to ram the original bill through by declaring, 'Unless there are objections this bill shall pass,' Nagata immediately protested that this was improper procedure and helped to lead the assembly's rejection of the measure. Indeed, throughout the 1880s, Popular Rightists continuously quarrelled among themselves about the location of hospitals, schools, and agricultural aid stations. In these instances, they were acting more as representatives of local interests than as allies in a struggle against the government.

Most of these delegates to the Fukui Prefectural Assembly—regardless of class origin, career aspirations, or political affiliation—performed their duties in a number of fairly consistent patterns throughout the decade of the 1880s. In general, they brought a sense of commitment and an attitude of serious concern to their deliberations. In addition, the assembly debates and decisions show how the representatives balanced national demands, conveyed in decrees from the central government in Tokyo and budget requests from Governor Ishiguro, against the interests and needs of Fukui residents. Moreover, the continuance throughout the decade of a variety of class, personal, and regional rivalries influenced both the decisions made by the delegates and the manner in which

[62] 高田事件. Additional details given in Inoue Toshio 井上鋭夫, *Niigata Ken no Rekishi* 新潟県の歴史 (Tokyo, 1970), pp. 91–4.

[63] *Hokuriku Shichishū Jiyūtō Konshinkai* 北陸七州自由党懇親会

[64] 赤井景韶

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they arrived at them. Paralleling these enduring features was a growing sophistication in defining issues, an expanding knowledge of how the assembly system worked and how it could be employed to a delegate's own advantage, and an increasing willingness to oppose the government.

Almost every area of assembly activity mirrors the representatives' sense of seriousness and commitment to fulfill their duties properly. Specifically, the assembly was authorized to enact its own bylaws and elect its own officers, to debate and pass on appropriation bills, and to determine local taxes. The officers included a chairman and vice-chairman, a Standing Committee[65] which reviewed proposed bills and could authorize emergency expenditures when the assembly was not in session, and a Health Committee[66] responsible for disseminating health information throughout the prefecture. The most important function of the assembly was to determine the annual prefectural budget, a package of appropriation and tax bills drawn up by the governor's office and submitted to the regular session of the assembly. Each appropriation bill contained major sections detailing the specific items for which the appropriation would be used. The police bill, for example, contained sections such as salaries, office supplies, equipment, etc., and the equipment section then listed amounts to be spent for summer uniforms, winter uniforms, boots, swords, umbrellas, and so forth.

The delegates' close examination of each detail reflects their sober approach. In the fiscal 1881 appropriation concerning assembly expenses, for example, the assembly approved one yen fifty sen for a charcoal box, fifty sen for a container to hold slippers, and four sen, seven rin, five mō for the purchase of tea pots.[67] And, when the assembly sought ways to cut the police appropriation in 1886, Katō Yojibei,[68] who later served in the Imperial Diet, argued that the request for office supplies, particularly lamp wicks, was exorbitant, and this section of the police expenditure was cut by nearly one-third.[69]

Another indication of this seriousness of purpose can be seen in the commitment of most members to fulfill faithfully their obligations of office. The three-man Health Committee established by the extraordinary assembly of May 1881, for example, had by the end of the year selected more than 1,700 health representatives to help identify outbreaks of contagious diseases and assist victims in obtaining medical attention.[70]

Additional examples abound. When some Sakai residents complained to Yao Hachibei in 1883 that the lack of an adequate bridge in their area denied them easy access to markets, schools, and hospitals, Yao petitioned the assembly to include additional funds in the 1883 budget for bridge construction. Later, when Yao himself visited the site and found the quality of the construction inferior,

[65] *Jōchi Iin* 常置委員
[66] *Chihō Eiseikai* 地方衛生会
[67] Further details are given in FKGS, pp. 529–32.
[68] 加藤与次兵衛
[69] FKGS, pp. 842–3.
[70] FKGS, pp. 544 & 558. This was almost one representative for each of Fukui's nearly 2,000 towns and villages.

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he complained directly to Governor Ishiguro.[71]

Also characteristic of the assemblies of the 1880s was a genuine concern for finding ways of satisfying local needs while also meeting the demands of the prefectural and national governments, outlined annually in Governor Ishiguro's proposed budget. A good example of how assembly delegates responded to competing priorities concerns the increase in taxes in Fukui during the 1880s. The prefecture's total tax bill, including local and national taxes, amounted to just over 1,450,000 yen for fiscal 1882 (1 July 1882 to 30 June 1883), and grew to nearly 1,670,000 yen in fiscal 1883. Concurrently, the typical Fukui resident was increasingly hard-pressed to meet his tax obligations. The prefecture's total rice production, which in 1882 reached 480,000 *koku*, fell by nearly ten percent in 1883. Moreover, the price for which the farmer could sell his reduced yield also was declining. The average price for a *koku* of rice on the Tokyo market was 10.49 yen in 1881. In 1883 it fell to 6.45 yen and dropped to 4.63 yen by the end of the year.[72] Responding to the growing impoverishment of Fukui's farmers, Yao Hachibei, Nagata Jōemon, and the former samurai Fujita Sonpei[73] jointly introduced a petition in the extraordinary session of December 1883 to postpone temporarily the collection of the land tax. It passed.[74]

The need to rationalize competing interests continued throughout the decade. For example, an 1886 decision by the government in Tokyo to expand local police forces compelled Governor Ishiguro to request a police appropriation nearly twenty percent higher than he had requested for fiscal 1884, and this proposal prompted a fierce debate. Yamamoto Kihei,[75] a landlord from Nifu, pointed out that Fukui residents were suffering from the twin disasters of an economic depression and a cholera epidemic, and suggested reducing both the number of policemen and their salaries. Katō Yojibei argued for curtailments in the amounts earmarked for police office expenses, and Aoki Shunpei[76] from Sakai urged slashes in the salaries of the office staff. In the end, the assembly reduced the proposed appropriation of 68,986 yen to 53,811 yen. A dissatisfied Governor Ishiguro, who as an official appointee of the Tokyo government was obliged to advance the central government's interests, reintroduced the bill at a level of 57,815 yen, and the assembly eventually compromised on 56,000 yen.[77]

The tension generated by various sorts of regional and personal rivalries also left its mark on the discussions and decisions of the assembly. Debate and action

[71] FKGS, p. 637. Assembly members in some prefectures apparently lacked this concern for the welfare of the commoners; see Andrew Fraser, 'Political Party Development in Tokushima Prefecture, 1880–1889', in *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Dept of Far Eastern History, the Australian National University, 11 (March 1975), pp. 143–5.

[72] FKGS, pp. 616–7; Nakazawa Benjirō 中沢弁次郎, *Nihon Beika Hendōshi* 日本米価変動史 (Tokyo, 1933), pp. 306 & 314. According to Nakazawa, rice prices in provincial markets generally rose and fell in the same pattern as the Tokyo prices.

[73] 藤田孫平

[74] FKGS, p. 617.

[75] 山本喜平

[76] 青木春平

[77] FKGS, pp. 842–3.

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on the education appropriation in the regular assembly session of 1886 illustrates the manner in which representatives from different districts competed vigorously for shares of local tax revenues. In that year, Governor Ishiguro requested an appropriation of 27,715 yen, 68 sen, of which 4,728 yen was specifically earmarked for the medical school in Fukui city and 2,052 for the development of an English-language school in Obama in Mikata *gun*. Citing the general economic slump and the already heavy burden of local taxes, representatives from *gun* other than Mikata joined in refusing to authorize a single yen for the English-language school. When it came time to debate the funds for the medical school, an obviously angered delegate from Mikata, Suma Hiroyuki,[78] argued: 'In this time when there are so many pressures on the people, we should completely defeat an appropriation for the medical school. We cannot spend such a large sum of money to graduate just three or four students.' The appropriation was cut by more than 25%.[79]

Hostility between commoners and *shizoku* also was evident in the Fukui Prefectural Assembly, as noted previously, and was directly responsible for the *shizoku* Honda Teisuke's retirement in 1883. Honda had departed for Tokyo on private business in late January and had not returned by the opening of the assembly on 7 March. On the 10th, certain members, apparently angered by Honda's condescending attitude toward commoners, succeeded in establishing a special committee to inquire into his conduct. According to regulations issued by the Tokyo government in 1880, this committee could, if it found sufficient neglect of duty, recommend that Honda be deprived of his seat. In addition, if found guilty, he automatically would have been prohibited from standing for re-election for four years.[80] Ironically, this regulation was designed to allow governors, as the central government's local representatives, to initiate action against Popular Rightists who, in many prefectures, used a boycott as a form of protest against government actions. Here, it was being used by assembly members to purge a fellow representative who strongly supported the government.

The five-man special committee was loaded against the former samurai. Two members, Nagata Jōemon and Tsuchiya Kyūzaemon, were Popular Rightists who had previously clashed with Honda in debate. All five took politics and the assembly seriously—Nagata and Kubo Kyūbei[81] were to serve later in the Imperial Diet; and two others, Nojiri Tōnai[82] and Kawabata Genzō, had long and distinguished careers on the local level.

Before the committee could reach a decision, however, Honda returned and took his seat. But within a week, an incident occurred which sealed his fate. At a dinner party for assembly representatives, Honda began calling out the name of Aoyama Shunpei,[83] a commoner, in an obnoxious manner and without using the customary honorific, *san*. Aoyama marched up in front of the former samurai,

[78] 須磨広之
[79] FKGS, pp. 852–8.
[80] JGD, pp. 288–9.
[81] 久保九兵衛
[82] 野尻東内
[83] 青山春平

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stuck his nose in Honda's face, and insultingly shouted, 'Honda! I'm going to pour you something to drink.' Angered, Honda began to punch Aoyama, and then fled from the restaurant. Within days, knowing that he was barely one step ahead of assembly censure, Honda submitted his resignation.[84]

Perhaps even more significant, however, than the enduring themes of rivalry, serious concern, and tension between local and national demands, were the changing attitudes and behavior of the delegates. Throughout the 1880s, assembly members were increasingly able to define issues in a sophisticated manner, to advance aggressively their own ideas, and to employ skillfully parliamentary procedures to their own advantage.

The first meeting of the assembly in May 1881 witnessed little of this skill and sophistication as the members routinely passed the governor's appropriation requests without serious objection. Typical is what happened when Governor Ishiguro requested an appropriation for the police of 15,740 yen, 26 sen, 2 rin. The assembly authorized 15,738 yen, 50 sen, 2 rin, though, to be sure, the representatives wondered how some of the requested funds meshed with the needs of Fukui residents. Tokioka Matazaemon, who later served in the Imperial Diet, questioned the 80 yen a month earmarked for 'stable expenses', an item which included funds for a groom's salary, fodder, veterinarian services, and saddle and equipment repair. He pointed out that most of Fukui's roads were not suited for travel by horseback, especially in winter when they were clogged with snow, and soberly warned that, although he would go along with the expenditure this time, he would oppose it in the future. The cause for the slight reduction was Kondō Tōgorō's[85] objection to paying 1 yen, 76 sen for a subscription to an expensive police journal, the *Kanreishinshi*.[86]

This naïveté and lack of forcefulness is mildly surprising in light of the fact that nearly half of the representatives to this first Fukui assembly had served in either the Shiga or Ishikawa prefectural assemblies in 1879 and 1880 when Fukui's *gun* were under the administrative jurisdiction of those two prefectures. This experience, however, apparently provided little beyond a rudimentary introduction to the principles and procedures of parliamentary government. For instance, the Ishikawa assembly showed little initiative in advancing its own ideas or programs: in 1879 it axed less than one-half of one percent of the 439,960 yen appropriation package submitted by the prefectural governor. The debates were equally docile and consisted principally of simple proposals to cut funds without extensive commentary or argumentation.[87]

The sixty-four members of the Shiga Prefectural Assembly were decidedly more aggressive: they reduced proposed appropriations by nearly ten percent in 1880, for example. But the thirteen representatives from the four *gun* that later

[84] Details of the dinner party are taken from the diary of a witness, Koizumi Kyōtarō 小泉敎太郎, quoted in FKGS, pp. 625–8.

[85] 近藤藤五郎

[86] 官令新誌. FKGS, pp. 539–40.

[87] For additional details on the Ishikawa Prefectural Assembly in 1879 and 1880, see FKGS, pp. 247–98; FK, pp. 49–50.

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became part of Fukui Prefecture played little or no role in this; nine were absent from the Shiga assembly of August 1879, and attendance was even worse in 1880. Indeed, of all the future Fukui residents elected to the earlier Shiga assembly, only two—Fujita Sonpei and Tokioka Matazaemon—participated actively in the Fukui assembly.[88]

Despite this slow start, members of the Fukui Prefectural Assembly were by 1882 starting to define issues presented to it more clearly and to offer some resistance to government proposals. In that year, Governor Ishiguro requested an appropriation of 6,358 yen, 95 sen, 5 rin for the promotion of agriculture and industry, of which 3,718 yen, 5 sen, 5 rin was earmarked for the promotion of agriculture, 1,415 yen, 90 sen for agricultural fairs and exhibitions, 569 yen for industry, and 656 yen for commerce. The assembly, composed largely of rural landlords, passed the amount for fairs and exhibitions, increased the funds for agriculture by nearly ten percent, reduced the commerce section by about 200 yen, and completely eliminated funds for the promotion of industry. The final appropriation came to 5,929 yen, 22 sen. The proposed police appropriation, to cite another example, totalled approximately 56,000 yen and included funds to hire sixty new policemen—an addition the governor claimed necessary because of increased Popular Rights agitation. The assembly, led by the Popular Rightists, protested such a large expansion in personnel and concluded that the prefecture could get by with just forty additional policemen. Consequently, they passed a reduced appropriation of 52,496 yen.[89]

During the next three years, the assembly members increasingly advanced their own proposals and ideas and more forcefully attacked government appropriations. It was in 1883, for example, that Yao Hachibei introduced his proposal to include additional funds for bridge construction in the public works bill and, when it passed, visited the construction site and then complained directly to Governor Ishiguro about the inferior quality of the work.

Tsuchiya Kyūzaemon also became a thorn in the governor's side. In early 1883, Ishiguro ordered a change in election procedures. Previously, a special election was called when an assembly member retired or died without fulfilling his full four-year term. This was a time-consuming process, however, and in some prefectures assembly members who opposed a government bill had developed the technique of resigning en masse, thereby making a quorum and passage of the bill impossible. Consequently, the Home Ministry in Tokyo, which retained authority over the assemblies, decided that prefectures could, if they so desired, elect a substitute for each delegate during the general elections. When six Fukui representatives retired and one died during the winter months of 1882 and 1883, Ishiguro announced that Fukui would elect a full set of substitutes in each future general election.

[88] FKGS, pp. 298–315; Shiga Kenshi Hensan Iinkai 滋賀県史編纂委員会, ed., *Shiga Kenshi* (Tokyo, 1928), IV, pp. 93–4; Shiga Kenshi Hensanshitsu, ed., *Shiga Ken Hyakunen Nenpyō* 滋賀県百年年表 (Shiga, 1971), p. 183.

[89] FKGS, pp. 584–5 & 594.

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In the assembly of March 1883, Popular Rightist Tsuchiya took the floor to argue against this. He pointed out that the number of retirements had been quite small and in no way threatened the existence of a quorum. Moreover, he continued, the mass election of substitutes would retard the development of representative government by reducing opportunities for the people to exercise their franchise. In conclusion, he introduced a petition to return to the original system. This motion failed, but was reintroduced in the next session by Shibata Sanae,[90] a Popular Rightist from Tsuruga *gun*. This time a number of representatives spoke up in favor of the bill. Others, however, still worried about the ability to form a quorum in case an extraordinary session had to be called quickly. In the end, the two sides compromised and passed a measure providing for the election of one-half as many substitutes as delegates in each general election. Governor Ishiguro accepted this.[91]

Assembly opposition to government fiscal demands also continued to stiffen, and 1884 marks the first year that the assembly, increasingly aware of its powers and concerned over the sharply deteriorating economic conditions in Fukui, made deep and significant cuts in proposed appropriations. The proposed appropriation package totalled close to 290,000 yen but was reduced to 261,638 yen, a cut of nearly thirteen percent. In 1882, the only previous year for which reliable figures for both proposed and approved appropriations exist, the assembly pruned the budget by just nine percent. Moreover, the 1884 budget was the lowest passed by the assembly so far, and represented an absolute reduction in expenditures of more than twelve percent compared to the previous year. Significantly, the 1884 assembly sharply slashed the police appropriation—an item closely watched by the governor—by roughly ten percent, from 57,365 yen to 51,795 yen. Of course, the police appropriation had been reduced in 1882; but the 1882 authorized expenditures had still represented an absolute increase over the previous year and had allowed an expansion of the police force and its activities. The 1884 police appropriation, on the other hand, was roughly ten percent lower than the 1883 authorization.[92]

The 1886 assembly represents the culmination of the above trends. In the regular session of November 1886, Governor Ishiguro introduced an appropriation package for fiscal 1887 totalling more than 319,000 yen—the largest proposed budget to date. Many assembly members were astonished and angered. Economic conditions were still bad: the price of rice on the Tokyo market, which had averaged 10.49 yen per *koku* for 1881 and 6.53 yen for 1885, had slipped to 5.11 yen in December 1886.[93] Moreover, a cholera epidemic had claimed nearly 5,000 lives during this year.[94] Consequently many delegates urged the assembly to reduce taxes and concentrate spending on those areas, such as public health,

[90] 柴田早苗
[91] FKGS, pp. 619, 637 & 658.
[92] FKGS, pp. 659 & 663–86.
[93] Nakazawa, pp. 314, 322 & 326.
[94] FKGS, p. 808.

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which would most benefit the general population. After several emotional speeches, the assembly cut Ishiguro's proposed budget by nearly 25%. Even after the governor resubmitted five bills, the assembly approved expenditures totalling only 251,504 yen, a reduction still in excess of 20%.[95] This must have been of some concern to Governor Ishiguro since budget cuts in nearby prefectures such as Gumma, Fukushima, and Akita averaged around 10% during this period of time.[96]

The police appropriation of 68,986 yen was the largest single item in the proposed 1887 budget and touched off a fierce debate. Many members called on the government to explain why such a large amount was necessary when the people were struggling with illness and economic depression. Yamamoto Kihei proposed reducing the number of men on the force and their salaries; Aoki Shunpei suggested pruning the office staff; and Katō Yojibei introduced amendments reducing expenditures for supplies. Finally, the assembly authorized an appropriation of merely 53,811 yen. When the governor resubmitted the bill (the assembly finally compromised at 55,947 yen), Yamamoto regained the initiative by introducing a special petition demanding that members of the police force be hired from among prefectural residents as much as possible in the future.[97]

In matched counterpoint to the above developments, Governor Ishiguro Tsutomu adjusted his own relations with the assembly. Born of samurai stock in Hikone *han*, Ishiguro participated in the Restoration movement on the anti-Tokugawa side and held a variety of posts within the new central government administration after 1868. When Fukui Prefecture was recreated in 1881, he became its first governor.[98]

As an appointee of the young national government and the guardian of Tokyo's interests, Ishiguro was responsible for general conditions within his jurisdiction and for the execution of policies originating in the capital. In regard to the prefectural assembly system, the central government expected the governor to successfully promote the system and encourage the growth of political representation on the local level, while at the same time maintaining a tight rein over any potentially dissident political activity lest some new challenge to central government authority emerge. It was these aspects of Ishiguro's duties which underlay the tension, and later serious overt conflict, between the governor and assembly representatives.

Despite what must have been intense pressure to exert more firmly a guiding hand over the legislative process, Governor Ishiguro strove during the early years of the assembly's existence to make the new system a success by adopting

[95] FKGS, pp. 841–73.

[96] In Gumma, Akita and Fukushima prefectures from 1879 to 1891, the biggest cut was 41%, in Gumma in 1879, but this was exceptional. In only three other cases did the reductions exceed 20%. The yearly reduction in these prefectures was well below 10% if the 1879 Gumma figure is dropped. Masumi, pp. 294–5.

[97] FKGS, pp. 842–3.

[98] FKGS, pp. 424–7.

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a lenient attitude. For the first five years he accepted the assembly's decisions, neither resubmitting any bills nor consulting with the Home Ministry. Ishiguro worked hard to promote harmonious relations in other ways. Despite the 1884 budget cuts, for example, his closing address to the assembly was congratulatory: 'You were able once again to obtain good results in a calm and peaceful fashion. This is extremely gratifying.'[99]

As the assembly became increasingly assertive and began to act in ways unacceptable to the governor, Ishiguro changed his tactics. In the extraordinary session of September 1886, he reintroduced an appropriation bill for the first time. In response to the cholera epidemic of that year, Ishiguro convened an extraordinary meeting of the assembly on 6 September and requested 43,678 yen to pay for additional medical supplies and doctors' salaries. Assembly members were concerned not only with the seriousness of the epidemic but also with the effects of imposing additional taxes on an economically depressed population. Many argued that the national government should make special funds available to Fukui and submitted petitions to that effect. Others focused on ways to effectively use appropriated funds. Nagata Jōemon, for example, argued that a distinction should be drawn between the poor and the well-to-do, that it was proper to pay for the treatment of the poor, but that the budget and taxes would become oppressive if medical payments were also made for the well-off. After days of debate, the assembly authorized expenditures of 15,473 yen, but approved no new taxes. Instead, it requested that the appropriation be covered with grants from the national treasury and from the prefecture's Disaster Relief Fund.[100]

On the very next day, Ishiguro resubmitted the original bill. The assembly was just as stubborn. Okabe Hiroshi, a Popular Rightist, argued:

> I believe this assembly has been completely useless. . . . When we petitioned the Home Minister to request a grant of 10,000 yen from the national treasury and also petitioned the governor to appropriate the balance from the Disaster Relief Fund, the Home Minister and the governor, who are the parents of all the people, assured us that they certainly would heed the decisions of this assembly. This assembly believes in [providing relief] without levying additional taxes directly on the people. Therefore, I feel this assembly must absolutely reject this bill [the reintroduced request for 43,678 yen].[101]

The assembly again approved of just 15,473 yen in expenditures, and no new taxes.

Ishiguro then announced that he would consult with the Home Minister.[102]

[99] FKGS, p. 659.

[100] *Bikōchochikukin* 備荒儲蓄金

[101] FKGS, p. 832.

[102] This was in accordance with Article 5 of the Regulations Concerning the Prefectural Assemblies as amended by Imperial Decree Number 4 on 14 February 1881. This article provided that if a prefectural governor was not satisfied with an action of the assembly, he could consult with the Home Minister and, with his approval, independently authorize an appropriation and the taxes to fund it. JGD, p. 301.

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On 23 October, he authorized 29,119 yen in expenditures for public health, to be covered by increased land and household taxes and a grant of 7,000 yen from the national government.[103] The governor repeated these steps a number of times in the next few years. In the 1886 regular assembly, he resubmitted five bills and took one to the Home Minister, and in the 1888 regular session, four items were reintroduced.[104] Finally, in 1888, Governor Ishiguro took the drastic step of suspending the assembly in mid-session.

The events surrounding and leading up to that dissolution throw into sharp relief almost all of the above themes concerning membership and rivalry, sensitivity to local needs and opposition to government, growing knowledge of how to use the system and increasing willingness to promote one's own ideas. During 1887 and 1888, members of the assembly had begun to sort themselves into factions, each led by a participant in the Popular Rights Movement. Okabe Hiroshi's *dobokuha*[105] advocated increased expenditures for public works. A second faction, led by Takeo Shigeru, took the name *kangyōha*[106] and, as their name implies, agitated for an expanded budget to promote agriculture and industry. The third and largest faction, the *nōminha*,[107] was dedicated to reducing all expenditures because of the heavy tax burdens on the farmers. The eruptions in the 1888 assembly pitted the *nōminha*, led by assembly chairman Nagata Jōemon, against an alliance of the other two factions.

The event which touched off the struggle between the two groups actually occurred in September, nearly two months before the regular session of the assembly was due to open. Large fires had broken out in Ōno in April and Obama town in July, causing some deaths and extensive property damage to homes, schools, shrines, and a post office. Then, in late August and early September, a series of floods damaged hundreds of roads and bridges throughout the prefecture. Soon after these floods, Governor Ishiguro summoned the Standing Committee to discuss relief measures.

Under the Rules Concerning Prefectural Assemblies, the Standing Committee was authorized to determine jointly with the governor the amount of emergency expenditures and methods of raising the necessary funds when an assembly was not in session.[108] Before 1888, Governor Ishiguro had always convened an extraordinary session of the assembly immediately following the Standing Committee's meetings and submitted the committee's recommendations to the assembly for debate and final determination.

The year was to be different. The *dobokuha* and *kangyōha*, with two members each, dominated the five-man Committee. Meeting in September, they decided to allot 6,632 yen for prefectural public works and to make public works grants totalling 28,950 yen available to towns and villages. To cover these expenditures,

[103] FKGS, pp. 827–32.
[104] FKGS, pp. 841–73 & 935–56.
[105] 土木派
[106] 竹尾茂, 勧業派
[107] 農民派
[108] This was set forth in Imperial Decree Number 68, issued on 28 December 1882. JGD, p. 309.

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the Committee proposed using 10,147 yen, 35 sen from the previous year's balance and levying an additional 17,991 yen, 24 sen in land taxes and 7,443 yen, 41 sen in household taxes. But then instead of convening an extraordinary assembly to discuss, and very likely reduce, these amounts, Ishiguro officially authorized expenditure of the funds and announced that the taxes would be levied.[109] It is not entirely clear whether Ishiguro or the Standing Committee initiated this unilateral action. Possibly the governor alone wanted to adopt this ploy because of his notable lack of past success in persuading extraordinary assemblies to approve emergency appropriations. More likely, however, both the governor and the Committee jointly agreed upon this tactic since four of the five Committee members favored massive public works expenditures.

In any event, the opening session of the eighth regular Fukui Prefectural Assembly was barely an hour old on 28 November when members of the *nōminha* began to take the floor and denounce the actions of the Standing Committee. Faction leader and assembly chairman Nagata Jōemon led the attack. Complaining that farmers could no longer bear up under the heavy rates of taxation, he called for the retirement of all Standing Committee members. Shirasaki Ichitarō[110] of Ōi *gun* passionately declared that the Standing Committee had destroyed the concept of extraordinary assemblies and robbed non-Committee assembly members of their rightful duties. In retaliation, Okabe Hiroshi—leader of the *dobokuha*, Standing Committee member, and assembly vice-chairman—angrily accused Nagata of making important decisions in private with the governor and then simply using the assembly to confirm them.[111]

A number of motives prompted this dispute. Some *nōminha* members were genuinely disturbed by high expenditures and heavy taxation. Others, like Shirasaki, seem deeply committed to making the prefectural assemblies a success and regretted any attempt to undercut their authority. But there was also a keen rivalry between Nagata and Okabe, who were frequent competitors for assembly office. In fact, Nagata had barely edged out Okabe in the election for assembly chairman the previous year, and Nagata's call for the resignation of the Standing Committee almost certainly was intended in part to force Okabe out of the assembly.

On the second day of the session, the introduction of the proposed budget for fiscal 1889 brought on a fresh round of arguments and accusations. The budget was a huge one, topping 300,000 yen for only the second time in the decade. Equally disturbing to the *nōminha* were the requests for education, prefectural public works, and the promotion of agriculture and industry. The education request was up 17,000 yen from the previous year; the prefectural public works proposal nearly doubled the appropriation passed in 1887; and the promotion of agriculture and industry request totalled almost ten times the amount approved

[109] FKGS, pp. 915–6.
[110] 白崎市太郎
[111] FKGS, pp. 929–34.

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just twelve months earlier.[112] Although concerned, Nagata was at first confident that he could muster enough support to reduce these requests significantly.

But the debates of the final few days of November and the first week of December made it increasingly obvious that the *dobokuha* and *kangyōha* were gaining strength. The reasons for this are unclear, but apparently were due in large part to the intrigues of Honda Teisuke, former representative and assembly chairman. In the process of establishing a business to manufacture Western-style umbrellas, Honda and some other *shizoku* were undoubtedly the intended recipients of a significant share of the proposed agriculture and industry appropriation. Meeting secretly with individual representatives, Honda and his colleagues had by the end of the first week in December somehow received assurances from fifteen delegates that they would vote for this appropriation.[113]

When Nagata learned of this development, he immediately called a meeting of his faction. Convinced that the agriculture and industry proposal would pass and that they would subsequently lose control over the assembly, the *nōminha* decided to force a dissolution. On the morning of 8 December, discussion was scheduled on the education appropriation. The chairman first recognized Imadachi's Yamamura Teisuke,[114] and he proposed an amendment deleting all funds earmarked for the normal school. Okabe immediately jumped to his feet and protested that this was impossible because a recent Imperial Decree ordered the establishment of a normal school in each prefecture. One after another, *nōminha* members took the floor to argue that this course of action was perfectly legitimate since they were not abolishing the normal school but simply refusing to provide funds. Fukui had already done a lot for education, they said, and the burdens on the taxpayer were heavy. If the national government wanted the prefectures to have normal schools, they concluded, then let the national government provide the money. After nearly two hours of debate, Nagata called for a vote on Yamamura's proposal to delete. It passed. Faced with this unequivocal rejection of a central government directive, Ishiguro suspended the assembly only a few hours later. The official notice of dissolution arrived from the Home Ministry on the 22nd.[115]

In accordance with regulations, new elections were held in January. Significantly, more than half of the original members were deeply enough committed to the prefectural assembly system to seek and win re-election, including such activists as Nagata, Yamamura, Takeo, Shirasaki, and Tokioka Matazaemon. Prominent former representatives such as Sugita Teiichi, Yamada Minoru, and

[112] FKGS, p. 935.

[113] The information about Honda is from the Koizumi diary, quoted in FKGS, pp. 930–1.

[114] 山村貞輔

[115] FKGS, pp. 936–9. Suspension and dissolution were serious matters and the Fukui difficulties were reported on the front page of the *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo) on 15 December. Also, Governor Ishiguro was forced to retire in early 1889. Returning to his native Hikone, he became the household tutor for the Ii family, the former daimyo of the *han*. FKGS, p. 427; *Daijinmei Jiten*, III, p. 188.

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Yamamoto Kihei also came out of retirement and helped to make the reconvened assembly a success. Meeting on fifteen days in February, the assembly reduced proposed education and promotion of agriculture and industry appropriations. But they compromised with the governor by authorizing funds for the normal school and by passing the largest police and prefectural public works appropriations ever.[116] The 1889 and 1890 sessions were also tranquil, and budget cuts approximated those made in the earlier years of the decade.

Rivalry, a sensitivity to local and national demands, a keen insight into the mechanics of power, an aggressive promotion of one's own ideas, a willingness to challenge the government, and a deep commitment to the system—these typify the 1888 regular session of the Fukui Prefectural Assembly. They merge with earlier themes of local elites, *shizoku*, the Popular Rights Movement, and election methods to highlight the main characteristics of the Fukui assembly during the first decade of its existence.

From the national government's perspective, the decade must have seemed turbulent. The assembly often had been uncooperative, at times it was outright critical, and once it had even seemed to threaten self-destruction. Indeed, the revisions made in the local self-government system in the late 1880s were partially in response to these kinds of difficulties.

Yet in broader and more fundamental terms, this experiment with local government appears to have fulfilled the main wishes of Meiji leaders such as Kido Kōin and Ōkubo Toshimichi. Power and decision-making had been decentralized. More significantly, the assembly system helped to forge a rough sort of unity between local and national interests. To be sure, men like Okabe Hiroshi, Yamamura Teisuke, and Nagata Jōemon did not always agree with the policies and programs of the national government. But they accepted the system and strove to make it effective. Their actions in January and February 1889 testify to this. So, too, does the career of Sugita Teiichi. A radical firebrand in the 1870s twice jailed for anti-government activity, Sugita became a respected member of the House of Representatives in the 1890s and received Imperial appointment to the House of Peers in 1909. He was not alone; from among those who sat in the Fukui assembly during the 1880s, more than a dozen eventually served in the Imperial Diet. The men of Fukui were committed to making the new governmental system work. In this sense, the prefectural assembly system had helped to raise the public consciousness, to foster a sense of unity, and to integrate Fukui into the national polity.

It is this integrative feature which imparts to the prefectural assemblies a significance transcending local boundaries. Historians frequently have expressed surprise at the comparatively peaceful nation-building process of the early Meiji period. When similar reform programs in other countries have ripped apart the fabric of society, why is it, they have asked, that the convulsive and far-

[116] FKGS, pp. 940–59.

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reaching set of Meiji reforms was accompanied by so little social protest. Charles Tilly has suggested recently that social dissidence has political roots and a political character, and that collective violence is most likely to occur when new groups are compelled to use coercive means to acquire membership in the political community, or conversely, when older groups attempt to limit membership.[117] Without denying the existence of a degree of social disruption, it is one of the conclusions of this article that new insights into the peaceful character of the Meiji transition can be gained by examining the role played by local deliberative bodies. The Fukui Prefectural Assembly, like those in Japan's other prefectures, helped to open the doors to participation in the Meiji government system to scores of individuals and interest groups. By smoothing the entry of these men and groups into the new political community and by giving them a defined participatory role in the political process, the prefectural assembly system contributed to the relatively harmonious transformation of Japanese society during the early Meiji period.

[117] Charles Tilly, 'The Changing Place of Collective Violence', in Melvin Richter, ed., *Essays in Theory and History* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 139–64; 'The Chaos of the Living City', in Charles Tilly, ed., *An Urban World* (Boston, 1974), pp. 86–108; 'How Protest Modernized in France', in William O. Aydelotte *et al*, ed., *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 196–256.

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